

February 3, 2011 (/full-blog/2011/02/mayor-supports-expanded-gambling.html)

Mayor supports expanded gambling (/full-blog/2011/02/mayor-supports-expanded-gambling.html)



(http://www.casinoreviewbank.com/dictionary_images/Slot_Machines.jpg)

by **Tara Hester**, Staff Member

Last month, Lexington Mayor Jim Gray said Kentucky horse farms are in need of expanded gambling in the state if they are going to survive. Janet Patton, *Gray Supports Expanded Gambling for Good of Bluegrass*, Lexington Herald-Leader, Jan. 8, 2011, available at <http://www.kentucky.com/2011/01/08/1590354/gray-supports-expanded-gambling.html#more>.

Gray says there are clear signs of distress at horse farms around Kentucky, and that revenue from expanded gaming would help to alleviate the problem. *Id.* “ If a Constitutional Amendment is timely, I can support it, if not. . .we all need understand that while we are waiting, the industry is leaving,” Gray stated. *Id.* While Gray acknowledged that the ultimate decision to draft legislation

was up to the Kentucky Legislature, he plans to take whatever steps he can as Mayor of Lexington to help. *Id.* After meeting with several members of the horse industry from across the state, Gray is convinced that immediate action is needed, and plans to start by having key lawmakers at his house for a reception later this month in an effort to re-push the gambling issue. *Id.*

Gray is not alone on his quest to expand gambling in Kentucky. Horse owners, trainers, breeders, and racetracks have stated that Kentucky tracks need alternative forms of gambling such as slot machines or casinos in order to compete with other states that allow this form of gambling. *Id.* And in November, Senate President David Williams said that if the democratic- controlled House passed a constitutional amendment concerning expanded gambling in Kentucky, the Republican Senate might consider it. Associated Press, *Ahead for 2011: Expanded Racetrack Gambling?*, Nov. 4, 2010, *available at* <http://cincinnati.com/blogs/nkypolitics/2010/11/04/ahead-for-2011-expanded-racetrack-gambling/>. However, he did not say if a Constitutional Amendment would ultimately pass, stating only that he thought there “might be some folks in the Senate that may be supportive of that (an amendment).” *Id.*

However, Gray's campaign for expanded gambling will not be an easy job to tackle with Kentucky's lawmakers. Governor Steve Beshear campaigned on the promise of expanding gambling in Kentucky, but his efforts, and a bill sponsored by House Speaker Greg Stumbo, failed last year. Janet Patton, *Gray Supports Expanded Gambling for Good of Bluegrass*, Lexington Herald-Leader, Jan. 8, 2011, available at <http://www.kentucky.com/2011/01/08/1590354/gray-supports-expanded-gambling.html#more>. Gray is not discouraged, however, and continues to push the legislature to reconsider the issue, at a time when Kentucky horse sales are down and tracks have been forced to cut racing this year. *Id.* While expanded gambling does seem like a quick and simple solution to the problem of a failing horse industry, it also presents its own set of challenges, including an increase in casinos and gambling sites around the state. However, when faced with the possibility of a reduced or extinct horse industry in Kentucky, a few slot machines seems like a small price to pay.

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It's good to know that Lexington Mayor Jim Gray supports gambling in Kentucky. For as long as the gambling will do good for the welfare of the public then that's a brilliant and intellectual decision.

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631 SOUTH LIMESTONE, LEXINGTON, KY

40508 (859) 257-4747 BLOG.KJEANRL@GMAIL.COM ([MAILTO:BLOG.KJEANRL@GMAIL.COM](mailto:BLOG.KJEANRL@GMAIL.COM))